

HOUSING FUTURES



Volume 3 Issue 4— October 2013

Annual General Meeting 18 November 2013

The Annual Report 2012-2013 is the most important document prepared annually by the board for SouthEast members. This year's Annual Report was initially reviewed by the board's Governance and Policy Committee. Likewise the audited financial statements were reviewed by the Audit Committee. Both these publications were then approved by the board. The Annual Report also reviews the co-operative's Strategy Plan and includes the Risk Management Plan and Key Performance Measures.



In the photograph L-R Dale Carroll (Compliance and Development Officer), Andrew Murray (Gatsby) and Ian McLaren (General Manager) finalising the Annual Report.



<https://twitter.com/SouthEastOOP>

Followers: **226** Tweets: **108** (23 Oct 2013)

COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISES BUILD A BETTER WORLD



Management Matters

ANNUAL REPORT MATTERS

Ian McLaren
General Manager



This year's Annual Report will be distributed before the Annual General Meeting. The report has been read and endorsed by your board. The board recognises the importance of the Annual Report and its endorsement is not token.

It is important that members read the Annual Report. It is the most important document presented to members each year. It is the board's opportunity to be accountable and transparent to members—and it is your opportunity to question the board about the Annual Report.

If you do not understand anything in the Annual Report, then, ask a question at the AGM. Other members may want the same clarification that you seek but are not asking the question.

As in the last two years, the Annual report 2012-2013 provides members:

- A Risk Management Plan.
- The Strategic Plan with key performance targets and whether or not these have been achieved.
- Our Key Performance Measures compared with previous years and other agencies.

This level of accountability and transparency in the SouthEast Annual Report is not provided, for example, in the Annual Reports of the registered housing associations (the big players).

As a co-operative, we have an obligation to be accountable and transparent to members and not use these words as vague assurances and meaningless affirmations. We need to demonstrate that what we do is consistent with what we say.

There is an equal obligation on members to require the board to be accountable and transparent—to ask questions and not tolerate ambiguous and vague responses. In asking questions, however, members should be precise and clear so that everyone can understand what is being asked and why. An ambivalent question invites an ambivalent response.

Nonetheless, we would like your feedback on how we are doing and whether you understand the Annual Report.

We are committed to improved content and communication, and any suggestions will be considered by the board in preparing next year's Annual Report.



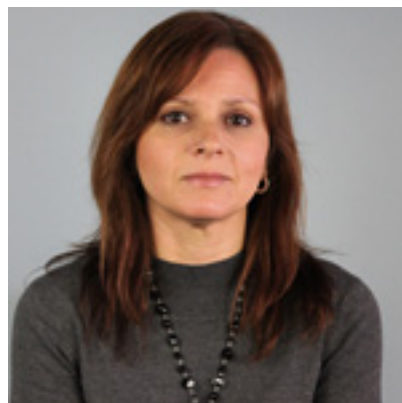
Meet the Staff—Michelle

Michelle D’Rozario

I joined the SouthEast Housing Co-operative in April 2008 as Administrative Officer/Assistant Asset Co-ordinator.

I heard about this position through an agency & was interviewed by Shirley Faram & Greg Flynn.

My duties involve assisting Jim (Asset Co-ordinator) in maintenance issues. We work very well together trying to achieve our goals. It can be very rewarding & we do our very best to put our tenant’s needs first.



Jim is highly qualified in his position & I am pleased to be working & learning from him. I am also responsible for the up keep of the office such as ordering office supplies, co-ordinating events, assisting with mail outs, answering phone calls and handling queries & all other administrative issues. I also hold a Certificate IV in Business Administration.

The Move

The move from Walker street to The Hub Plaza Business Centre Dandenong was co-ordinated by myself. This involved a lot of headaches, not to mention masking tape! We all moved without too much disturbance into our new location. It’s a beautiful & well organised office.

Over the years I have worked for other organisations such as The Franklin Mint, AMP Society in Melbourne, ANZ nominees in Melbourne and Wathan Curnow & Cocks (customs agency) World Trade Centre.

The People

What I like most about working for SouthEast Housing Co-operative are the people. We all have such wonderful cultural backgrounds & work well as a team with the upmost respect for each other. We all have a delightful sense of humour & this makes the office environment a pleasant place to work. I work with the friendliest and most dedicated people any organisation would be proud to have.

Our mission is to provide affordable, secure, financially and environmentally sustainable housing for people on low incomes in the south east of Melbourne who want to be part of a housing co-operative and we do it considerably well!

Jan's Liveability Passion



"I'm passionate about SouthEast, about where we can go and help members," declares SouthEast member and director Jan Dickson.

Jan has been a member since 2001. She was on the board between 2002 and 2005 and returned to the board in 2011. She is a member of the board's Governance and Policy Committee.

"I would like to see people staying in their own homes—people who have been independent all their lives. People who have been independent don't like handouts.

They find it hard to ask people for help."

Jan has been working on a liveability policy for SouthEast. The impetus for this was discussion on the board and its Governance and Policy Committee on the further development of the existing disability modifications policy. The liveability policy will be considered at the AGM.



CHFV is preparing a White Paper on a pathways to housing—in anticipation of the Victorian Government's pathways response that is due by the end of this calendar year. The CHFV pathways is planned to be ready for the end November.

The Victorian Government decided that the annual fire levy charge on properties would from this year be charged by councils—instead of insurance companies.

The future of the Community Housing Peak Bodies is being discussed. Read the prospectus that you can download [here](#) and come to the members meeting to have your say. Download the document: [A National Industry Body for community housing organisations - Consultation Prospectus](#)

Common Equity Housing Ltd's (CEHL), John McInerney will be retiring as Chairman of CHFV. This will follow his resignation from CEHL this year. Read an interview with John on pp. 13-15.

CHFV News

<http://www.chfv.org.au/chfv-news-landing/>

Housing Futures Content Analysis

The following analysis is based on subject areas and number of items.

Subject of Item	Total No Items Feb-Feb 2012	Total % of Items Feb Feb 2012 – Feb 2013	July 2013	April 2013	Total No Items April – July 2013	Total % April-July 2013	Total No of Items Feb 2912 July 2013	Total % of Items Feb 2012 – July 2013
Member Meetings	14	15.4	2	1	3	9.67	17	14.04
Tenancy	6	6.6	4	4	8	25.80	14	11.57
Board	11	12.08	3	1	4	12.90	15	12.39
Co-op housing	13	14.3		1	1	3.22	14	11.57
CHFV	1	1.1				0	1	0.82
SouthEast films	9	9.9		1	1	3.22	10	8.26
Co-operators	4	4.4			1	3.22	5	4.13
Social Housing consultation	9	9.9				0	9	7.43
SouthEast web site	4	4.4		1	1	3.22	5	4.13
Housing Futures	2	2.2				0	2	1.65
Other Govt	4	4.4	2	4	6	19.35	10	8.26
Other Coops	10	11	1	2	3	9.67	13	10.74
Maintenance	2	2.2	2	1	3	9.67	5	4.13
H Registrar	1	1.1				0	1	0.82
Housing	1	1.1				0	1	0.82

A content analysis facilitates accountability and transparency—providing an overview of actual content over a period of time and a factual basis for discussion about the content.

Coalition Housing



Kevin Andrews is the Minister for Social Services in the new Federal Coalition Government—following the election on 7 September 2013. Mr. Andrews will be responsible for housing. Before the election he was Shadow Minister Families, Housing and Human Services

2004, 2007, and 2010.

Kevin Andrews was elected to the Australian Commonwealth Parliament as the member for the Victorian seat of Menzies at a by-election in 1991. He was re-elected in 1993, 1996, 1998, 2001,

The Menzies electorate coincides with the area of the City of Manningham, spreading along the Yarra River from Bulleen to Wonga Park, in Melbourne, Australia. It also includes part of the City of Maroondah. Kevin's electorate office is located at 651 Doncaster Road, Doncaster. The Electorate of Menzies is named after Sir Robert Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia (1939-41; 1949-66)



Since his election, Kevin has served on numerous Parliamentary Committees, including the Joint Select Committee on Family Law Issues, the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties and the Joint Select Committee on Intelligence Services.

He has also served as Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Chairman of the Federal Government's Policy Committee on Family and Community Services and Deputy Chairman of the House of Representatives Economics Committee. Kevin has also served as Shadow Minister for Schools, Vocational Education and Training (1993-1994).

Kevin's Ministerial appointments included: Minister for Ageing (2001-2003), Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service (2003-2007) and Minister for Immigration and Citizenship (2007).



Following the defeat of the Howard Government, Kevin was appointed as Chairman of the Coalition's Federalism Taskforce. He was subsequently appointed Chairman of the Coalition Policy Review and Coalition Policy Coordination Committee in 2008 and held that position until December 2009. Raised in country Victoria, Kevin studied law and arts at Melbourne University, where he lived at Newman College, before completing a Master of Laws at Monash. Before his election to parliament, Kevin was an Associate to Sir James Gobbo before practicing law at the Victorian Bar. He was named Australian Young Lawyer of the Year for his community work in establishing a legal scheme for disaster victims, and for publishing a book for seniors about the law.

An avid cyclist, Kevin is married with five children.

SouthEast Performance

Key Performance Measures (KPM)

Data: at 30 June 2013


	KPM	SouthEast 2010-10	SouthEast 2011-12	Similar agencies 2011-12	SouthEast 2012-13
1	Regular board meetings	100%	100%	97.2%	100%
2	Active board members	83.1%	82.7%	85.8%	88.9%.
3	Business plan and budget approval finalised within reasonable timeframe	27/7/2011 and 24/6/2011	29/6/2012 and 27/7/2012	N/A	Budget approved 31 May 2013. 26/07/13
4	Staff turnover	14.3%	0%	14.9%	0.0%
5	Senior staff turnover	50.0%	0%	19.6%	0.0%
6	Turnaround time	12 days	21 days	9 days	17 Days
7	Void loss	0.2%	0.3%	1.3%	0.2%
8	Rent outstanding from current tenants	0.6%	0.5%	1.0%	0.7%
9	Arrears written off as bad debt	0.1%	0	1.3%	0.1%
10	Evictions (percentage of exits)	0	0	6.0%	0.0%
11	Tenancies maintained	95.6%	100%	85.1%	100.0%
12	Current tenants owing more than 8 weeks	0	0	1.7%	0.0%
13	Complaints from tenants/prospective tenants resolved within 30 days.	40.0%	0.0%	82.5%	0.0%
14	Tenants satisfaction - housing services	79.3%	89.4%	90.0%	90.80
15	Tenants satisfaction - consideration of views	82.8%	78.8%	84.4%	86.36
16	Urgent repairs resolved in 24 hours	100%	95.7%	94.5%	95.3%
17	Non-urgent repairs resolved within 14 days	100%	98%	93.6%	97.0%
18	Tenant satisfaction - maintenance	69.0%	81.8%	83.5%	84.88

Waiting Maintenance



Jim Kokoras, Property Officer

Feedback Options

 03 97056 8005

Email: jim@sehc.org.au

Facsimile:  03 9706 8558

Online:

<http://www.sehc.org.au/index.php/services/maintenance-form>

Maintenance at [sehc.org.au](http://www.sehc.org.au)
<http://www.sehc.org.au/index.php/services/maintenance>

Cyclical maintenance is subject to waiting periods. Cyclical Maintenance is preventative works such as painting and replacement of worn items such as carpets, fencing, guttering, heating & cooking appliances etc. Cyclical maintenance is assessed and done on a needs basis. If a member requests cyclical works, the SouthEast office will either assess the claim and put it on the cyclical works list to be completed at a later date or, alternatively, the tenant will be advised that works are not necessary at this point in time.

Cyclical Works are prioritised and are responded to on a needs basis. Works are undertaken when sufficient funds are available. Where possible, tenants of houses undergoing cyclical maintenance will be consulted on choice of colours within certain limits. Ceilings will be white; walls are to be lighter pastel colours. Carpets are to be durable and a colour that does not highlight stains.

The waiting time for cyclical maintenance is when the cyclical maintenance is listed as a job and when the job is undertaken. Members have to wait for cyclical maintenance jobs to be done because there is a limited budget and priorities are established based on need.

SouthEast Video Stats



The films were uploaded to YouTube on 27—29 February 2012. Numbers in brackets—times viewed as at 23 October 2013.

Total You Tube views—3444

The Trailer (1040)

<http://youtu.be/z1Y813L-xR4> 2m

The Other Way Home (1441)

<http://youtu.be/9R4ZCACLgJE> 12m 41s

Advertorial—Co-operation Works (963)

<http://youtu.be/x59NDnT3apo> 30s

Privacy: SouthEast is committed to protecting your privacy and complying with all applicable privacy laws. If you have any questions or comments about our privacy practices, we can be contacted at PO Box 7141, Dandenong Phone: 3175. 03 9706 8005. Fax 03 9706 8558

Annual Rent Review

Rent charges for members are calculated in accordance with the Department of Human Services criteria for long term community housing and must be paid in advance.

Members are required to advise SouthEast of any income changes as they occur during the year and to supply supporting documentation.

SouthEast undertakes an annual review of income in order to determine rental levels.

Rent reviews are to occur every 12 months. The SouthEast annual review is **initiated three months** before the due date for any changes to the rent charges which will apply from the 1 July of each year.

The review requires all members to provide income information for all household members who are 18 years or over.

The rent charge required of members is calculated and members are given **60 days** notice of the rent payable from 1 July.

Unless members provide the information on income by the due date it can be assumed that members on a rebated rent no longer require the rebate and they can be charged cost rent.

In fact, only about 50% of members respond by the due date and too many follow-up letters and telephone calls are required to get the information that members are obliged to provide.

There was a suggestion at the General Meeting of members on 20 May 2013 that members needed more time in responding to the annual review request. The time allowed for members to respond is reasonable.



Joy Haines, Tenancy Officer

Feedback Options

Telephone:  03 9706 8005

Email: joy@sehc.org.au

Facsimile:  03 9706 8558

Online:

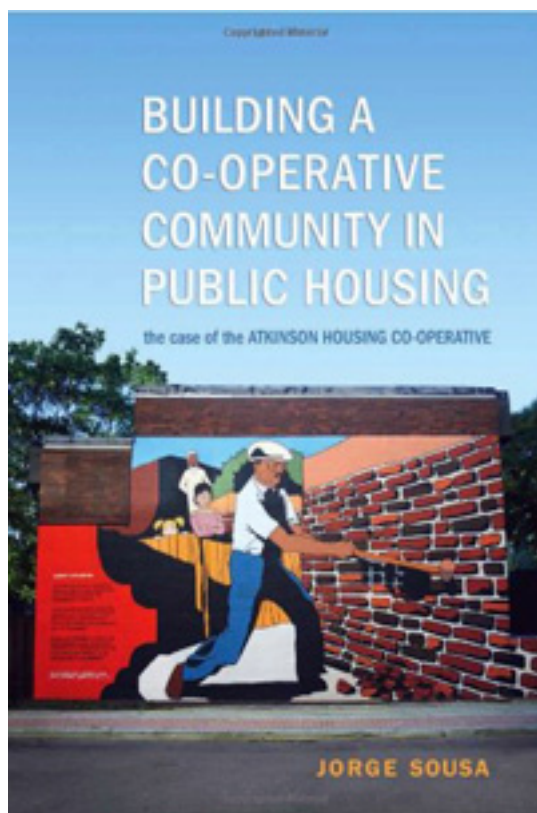
<http://www.sehc.org.au/index.php/services/tenancy-form>

<http://www.sehc.org.au/index.php/services/maintenance-form>

Tenancy at [sehc.org.au](http://www.sehc.org.au)

<http://www.sehc.org.au/index.php/services/tenancy>

Co-operative Conversion



Public housing projects were the original form of government supported housing for low-income residents in Canada. Over the last fifty years many projects have struggled with high crime rates and numerous social problems. One solution proposed to address these ongoing issues has been to grant residents decision-making power within their community by converting into a co-operative. Building a Co-operative Community in Public Housing follows the journey of a Toronto public housing complex as it was converted into a resident-operated co-operative, a first in Canada.

Jorge Sousa traces the story of Alexandra Park, which became the Atkinson Housing Co-operative in 2003 after a ten-year conversion process. Sousa, who himself was raised in the community, provides an empirical account of the contributing factors that influenced its decision to pursue community-based control, as well as the experiences of both residents and government officials engaged in this process.

Building a Co-operative Community in Public Housing offers a framework for other communities facing similar circumstances who want to learn how to go about undertaking this process. All

royalties from this book will be contributed to the Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto Charitable Fund.

Building Co-operative Community in Public Housing

University of Toronto Press, 2013,

Jorge Sousa is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education, at the University of Alberta

Alexandra Park is a 410 unit housing project in downtown Toronto. The project was built in 1968, and includes 140 apartments in two medium rise apartment buildings and 270 townhouses. Many people who live in the project have low incomes. Atkinson Housing Co-op is conveniently located in the heart of



one of Toronto's most diverse neighbourhoods. It includes Chinatown and Kensington Market. There are 147 apartments in two buildings and 263 town houses covering an 18 acre site. There is a Community Centre as well as Day-care Services for Atkinson members and residents. There are also two playgrounds and two basketball courts on site.

71 Augusta Square

Toronto , Ontario M5T 2K6

Phone: 416-504-6993

Fax: 416-504-8436

Email: [in-](mailto:info@atkinsonhousingcoop.com)

fo@atkinsonhousingcoop.com

<http://www.atkinsonhousingcoop.com/>

The co-op came to be called the Atkinson Housing Co-operative, named after Sonny Atkinson, a long time president of the Alexandra Park Residents' Association (APRA). It was Sonny Atkinson who led the Alexandra Park residents as they began the process of converting from public housing to co-op housing.

Home Fire Safety

In 2008/2009 Fire & Rescue NSW reported attending 4,545 house fires. Of those, 1,054 were caused by unattended heat sources such as foodstuffs on stoves and another 651 by electrical short circuits. The areas of the house where most fires occur are the kitchen (2,156) sleeping areas (487) and lounge area (316).

Are you fire safe in the home?

The fire services recommend this simple safety checklist to assist in keeping your home fire safe.

Installing an adequate number of suitable [smoke alarms](#) and testing them regularly is the first step in your home fire safety plan.

Having a written [escape plan](#) in case of fire and practicing it regularly.

Make sure keys to all [locked doors](#) are readily accessible in case you need to escape.

Never leave [cooking](#) or any other open flame including candles or oil burners unattended.

Clean the lint filter of your clothes dryer each and every time you use it.

Never smoke in bed and take extra care if consuming alcohol whilst smoking.

In [Winter](#) take extra care when using heaters, electric blankets or open fires.

Don't [overload power points](#) and switch off appliances when not in use.

Always keep lighters and matches away from [children](#) and educate them that they are "tools not toys" to only be used by responsible adults.

If you have a [garage or shed](#) remember to take extra care with any stored chemicals and fuels and always refuel mowers, edgers etc. when they are cold and in the open.

If you have a [gas](#), electric or wood [BBQ](#) always check that it is in safe working order before lighting and that it is always in the care of a responsible adult when in use.

If you live in a [bushfire](#) prone area keep the ground around your home clear of leaves and other litter and remember to clean your gutters regularly.



Fire safety tips

- Remember that smoke from a fire will make you confused and that you cannot see in smoke.
- When asleep you will not smell smoke and it will in fact put you into a deeper sleep.
- If you have escaped from a home fire, remember once you get out stay out and dial - 000.
- Oil, gas or wood heating units may require a yearly maintenance check.

Only ever use fuses of recommended rating and install an electrical safety switch.

Open Office at SouthEast



SouthEast had an Open Office Morning Tea on Friday 11 October 2013.

One non member (a spouse of a director) five directors and two non director members and all staff and the GM participated and enjoyed morning tea.

Chairperson Shirley Faram welcomed all and wished that more could have been able to attend.

The General Manager conducted a brief tour of the office including the mysteries of the tea room, the store room, the problems of the car park, the security system and how to access the toilets.

It was a pleasant social event for all and an opportunity to get to know each other. The only disappointment was that several members had to apologise over the last couple of days — and a few forgot to apologise.

“It was an opportunity for members to see our new offices and meet the staff who serve our members so well,” said the General Manager Ian McLaren.



McInerney Co-op Matters

John McInerney has been an important influence on the development of co-operative housing in Victoria. Housing Futures put some questions to John and these and his responses are reproduced on this and the following pages.



When did you first become involved in co-operative housing?

I have been employed as Managing Director of CEHL since 2002. Prior to this role I have been involved in community housing since the early 1980s and first become aware of and interested in co-op housing from my involvement in the Western Region Housing Council which was a lobby group in Melbourne's western suburbs and been an active supporter of housing co-operatives throughout my career.

Do you believe there is a real co-operative difference in co-operative housing?

In a word yes, I think co-operative housing makes a real difference to those who embrace the opportunities that co-operative housing offers. The biggest difference is that the underlying principles behind co-operative housing are self help and people engaging with others to improve all of their lives. In my view it is unfortunate that the majority of affordable rental housing is now being offered under a welfare paradigm where people are offered rental housing but are required to be supervised or engage with case management services to fix their problems for as long as they rent the property. This results in the broader society stigmatizing affordable housing as government housing for people with serious social or behavioral problems. Co-operative housing focuses on people abilities not their disabilities. Co-op members have real chances to exert a high degree of control over their housing. The co-op structure also requires members to consider fellow members situations and to resolve matters for the benefit of all members and not to just focus on their own needs. I have witnessed many cases whereby successful participation in housing co-ops directly benefits people through extending friendships, developing self confidence and transferable skills that assist members in many other facets of their lives.

Where is co-operative housing today compared with the 1980s?

I find this a difficult question to answer. I do recall that for a period in the 1980s there was a strong government commitment to co-operative housing and a degree of excitement when the then Ministry of Housing was active in trying to stimulate housing co-operatives and piloting both the Rental Housing Co-ops(RHC)and the Common Equity Rental Co-operatives (CERC) programs. This was an exciting period and there were government ministers such as Race Mathews and Andrew McCutcheon who were really committed to developing housing co-ops and showed great leadership. Unfortunately it is my perception that housing co-ops in Victoria fell out of favour in the 1990's and early 2000's as governments made decisions to restrict access to government subsidised rental housing program to people who were deemed to be more disadvantaged turning the provision of rental housing into a welfare program.

McInerney Co-op Matters



Co-op structures and empowering tenants through co-ops was not favoured by the social work industry that took over the management of social housing in most States across Australia. I think today there is almost a begrudging respect for co-operative housing because it achieves such good results for its members but that it is still not liked or favoured by most of those charged administering social housing programs as it does not fit their welfare view of social housing.

What do you see as the challenges for co-ops going forward into the future?

I think there are hints in some of my previous answers. Co-ops still need to get better at promoting their successes. Co-ops need to be able to debunk some of the negative myths peddled about co-ops such as they are rife with nepotism and exclude many genuine applicants or that they are inefficient due to their democratic decision making. There are also some real challenges due to scale, there needs to be strong networks among co-ops to support, resource and train members to manage their co-ops or assist staff that co-ops employ.

How would you describe your achievements at CEHL?

I would start by saying I have been very fortunate to step in to CEHL as the CERC model is indeed a sound model and there has been great program development over many years. Looking back my main challenge and I hope success was re-establishing CEHL and CERCs credibility with government and the social housing sector. Challenging some of the negative myths and getting the co-op program back into a position where we could successfully get access to government grants to grow the program. CEHL had become too insular and tended to only focusing on its internal issues and did not project itself or its successes to a broader audience.



CEHL Eco-housing at Heidelberg

Co-housing is a type of residential development where a dwelling is one of about 15-40 clustered around a common house and open space. In this development, residents will occupy their own self-contained homes, but regularly share meals and some facilities such as common garden, laundry, workshop and recreation rooms.

Development Summary: 18 eco-units on a co-housing plan

Contractor: Momentum Builders

Commencement date: February 2010

Completion date: November 2011

Total cost: approx. \$8.2 million

This project is funded jointly by Common Equity Housing and the Federal Government's Economy Stimulus Package Nation Building Program. All units in this development are to be retained by Common Equity Housing and will be managed and leased by *Earth CERC*.

McInerney Co-op Matters

The CEHL Board made promoting co-operative housing one of my key performance criteria. I think we have managed to lift the profile of CEHL.

Do you think small co-operative housing providers have a future and why?

Again my one word answer is yes. Why, because housing co-ops are a sound model and good services are often delivered in small personalised environments.



(L to R) John McInerney, General Manager CEHL, Ian McLaren CEO Southeast Housing Co-operative, keynote speakers Mervyn Wilson CEO and Principal of the Co-operatives College UK and Richard O'Leary Director IYC 2012 Secretariat

What are the challenges for small co-operative providers?

Small co-ops do have challenges such as sharing the workload, how to ensure members or staff cover or have access to the broad range of skills required to operate a successful co-op.

Small usually also means limited income or more importantly limited ability to accumulate reserves to get a co-op through any rough patches or loss of key personnel which makes small co-ops somewhat vulnerable. I think these challenges can be overcome by co-ops working more closely together and making rational decisions about what functions are best placed to do at the small local level and what things should they look to do jointly with other co-ops or with sympathetic business partners. So in summary I would say that small co-ops can thrive but they probably need to ensure they network well and make strategic connections to ensure their longevity.

Is there a risk with existing and any new peak housing bodies that small providers will be ignored or dominated or marginalized by the larger dominant providers?

This seems to be a loaded question. Of course such risk exists but that does not mean that it is inevitable that this will be the case. Through all walks of life there are big and small players or others with different political perspectives jostling for attention recognition or political positioning. Small players need to stay engaged and be confident about holding their positions and extolling their advantages. The ultimate test is whether those advantages are being achieved and are real. I do believe there will always be a place for small, local, well run community groups managing housing tailored for their area or target group. As mentioned earlier I strongly believe that these agencies need to engage in networks including peak bodies to make sure they stay relevant and recognized. I believe the biggest risk is to become isolated or invisible because then it becomes so much more likely for small organizations to fail or to be subject to a unfriendly or hostile takeover.

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Board Public Records

Public records of board meetings are available on the SouthEast web site at:

<http://www.sehc.org.au/index.php/board/public-records>